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## *House of Representatives*

### US House Asks China to Let Gravely Ill Nobel Laureate Travel to America for Medical Care (H. Con. Res. 67)

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey... Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my very good friend from California for his graciousness in yielding me this time and for his wonderful work as a Member of Congress on human rights and pro-life issues. I thank him for that leadership.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, I rise and note to my colleagues that the news of Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo's diagnosis of terminal liver cancer was a jarring shock to everyone who admires this champion of freedom and democracy.

Tonight, the House has under consideration an urgent resolution, a truly urgent resolution, H. Con. Res. 67, which I introduced, joined by Ms. PELOSI, and several of the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, she and I together, some bipartisanship in a place where we have had little of it lately. But here we are joined, and we are joined very strongly on behalf of Liu Xiaobo and his dire, dire situation, and that of his wife.

The legislation urges the Government of the People's Republic of China to unconditionally release Liu Xiaobo, together with his wife, Liu Xia, to allow them to freely meet with friends, family, and counsel, and seek medical treatment wherever they desire.

The operative language of the resolution makes it very clear that it recognizes Liu Xiaobo for his decades of peaceful struggle for basic human rights and democracy and, again, urges that he be able to seek medical care, including treatment in the United States or wherever else he would like to receive it.

I want to thank Majority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY. This resolution was introduced yesterday. The majority leader made sure that this legislation came to the floor just a few hours ago to ensure that we went on the record as a Congress showing our solidarity of Liu Xiaobo and his wife and our deep, deep compassion and concern for the plight that he finds himself in.

I want to thank Speaker RYAN, who also expressed strong concern for Liu Xiaobo, and, of course, NANCY PELOSI and STENY HOYER because this required bipartisan support to bring it up on the UC; and also ED ROYCE, the chairman of the full Committee on Foreign Affairs, the famous gentleman from California, and, of course, the ranking member, ELIOT ENGEL.

Mr. Speaker, in February of 2010, I led a bipartisan group of lawmakers nominating Liu Xiaobo for the Nobel Peace Prize and, at the same time, nominating two other persecuted Chinese human rights advocates, Chen Guangcheng and Gao Zhisheng, to be joint recipients of this most prestigious award. Others, including the great Vaclav Havel, also pushed for Liu to get this important recognition which we had hoped would help push the human rights agenda in China.

The Nobel Peace Prize Committee agreed and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo for his “long and nonviolent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.” I attended the Oslo ceremony, at the invitation of the family, along with Leader PELOSI. It was a moving ceremony,

Mr. Speaker. The now famous empty chair spoke volumes about the Chinese Communist Party’s abiding fear that human rights and democracy will undermine its power. There, on the stage, was this chair without the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

After that, I held several hearings both in the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations and also on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which I co-chair with MARCO RUBIO. And again, we always had a picture

of the empty chair where Liu Xiaobo should have been rightly honored and hopefully freed to pursue the righteousness of his human rights work.

He said, in absentia, that day: “Freedom of expression is the foundation of human rights, the source of humanity, and the mother of truth. To strangle freedom of speech is to trample on human rights, stifle humanity, and suppress truth.”

Chinese authorities have gone to great lengths to stifle Liu Xiaobo’s ability to speak truth to power. In 2009, he was given an 11-year prison sentence for “inciting subversion of state power.”

His wife, Liu Xia, also was detained in de facto form “house arrest” since 2010. She is in urgent need of medical care, as well, having been hospitalized for a heart condition. Over the past year, authorities have allowed her to visit her husband only on a very few occasions.

According to Chinese authorities, Liu’s conviction was based on Charter 08, a treatise signed by over 300 intellectuals and activists. That document states that freedom, equality, and human rights are universal values of humankind, and that democracy and constitutional government are the fundamental framework for protecting these values.

Sadly, Liu Xiaobo and Liu Xia, his wife, are not alone in facing unjust repression.

As of September 2017, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which collects and maintains probably the most effective and comprehensive political database for any country—and this is on China—contains information on at least

1,400 cases of known political or religious prisoners.

According to the annual report, the government of President Xi Jinping has engaged in an extraordinary assault on the rule of law, human rights, ethnic minority groups, and civil society in recent years.

Under Xi's leadership, the Chinese Government has pushed through new laws and drafted legislation that would legitimize political, religious, and ethnic repression, further curtail civil liberties, and expand censorship of the internet. And the whole issue of the one child, now maybe two child per couple policy, coercion and population control, continues to harm women and children with extreme hurtfulness. It is just beyond the pale of what a government

should be doing to its own people.

It is tempting to be pessimistic about China's future and the future of U.S. relations. Frankly, I am not pessimistic, despite the circumstances, because I do believe Liu Xiaobo is the future, and people who have his belief in fundamental human rights.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by just saying I believe that someday China will be free; someday the people of China will be able to enjoy all of their God-given rights, and a nation of free Chinese men and women will honor and celebrate Liu Xiaobo as a hero. He will be honored, along with all of the others like him, who have sacrificed so much for so long for freedom